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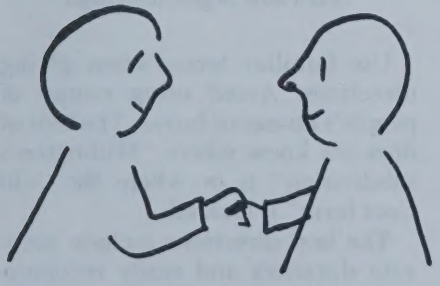
Tourism: Greeting The Guest

by Tom Quinn, Regional Supervisor, Upper Peninsula. Illustrated by Lilian Isotalo.

Introduction

Tourism is a people-pleasing business. Beautiful lakes, forests, parks, rock formations, historic sites, resorts, museums, and recreation facilities are of little value unless the people visiting them feel welcome and are treated courteously. Tourism is people oriented and people dependent. Visitors must be pleased with what they see and experience in their contacts with local people. The name of the tourism game is HUMAN RELATIONS.

A people failure in any tourist-related business spells disaster. The finest motel, restaurant, gift shop or ski resort cannot survive if its employees have a negative attitude toward tourists. Visitors expect a pleasant experience. A positive attitude of the local people toward visitors, and their courtesy, warmth, friendliness and sincere willingness to serve are the basis for that pleasant experience.

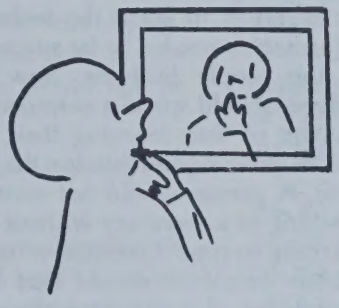


Be friendly.

People remember their travel experiences for a lifetime, often as their fondest memories. It is the job of the tourist business employee to make these memories as pleasant as possible.

Attitude, technical competence, appearance, and personality are four important qualifications that a good tourist business employee must possess. This bulletin briefly outlines each of these qualifications.

Attitude



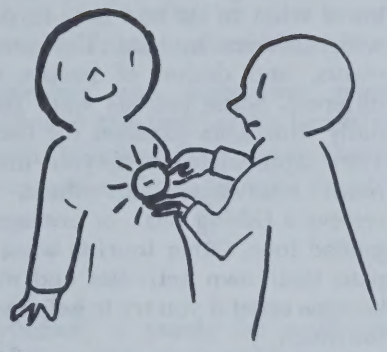
Your attitude shows.

"YOUR ATTITUDE SPEAKS SO LOUDLY I CAN'T HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY."

The attitude of local people towards tourists is a signal to tourists of how enjoyable their visit is going to be. It is unfortunate, but true, that the visitor often perceives an attitude of "We like your money, but we really don't want you."

The ingredients of a tourist-acclimated attitude are as follows:

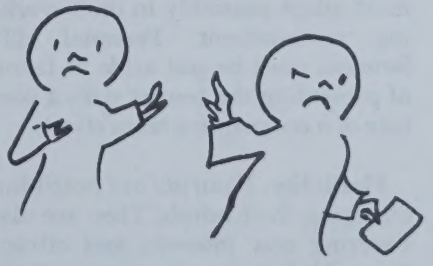
Pride: Pride in the job and the community spells success in any tourist business. No matter what the job is, it is an important one for the tourist industry, the individual employer, and the home community. Be proud that people are interested in your area. Satisfaction comes



Take pride in the job.

from knowing you are doing all you can to make people feel welcome. Pride makes for friendliness and openness in dealing with tourists. Take pride in the job. It's important and it shows.

Patience: Tourists can be the friendliest people you will ever meet. They can also be the most trying at times. It takes considerable patience for a tourist industry employee to overlook the frequent grumbling and snapping of road-weary travelers.



Patience is a virtue.

Before snapping back at demanding tourists, try to understand what they have just gone through—driv-

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ing many miles to reach your area, road weary and perhaps the victims of car trouble or unexpected expenses; maybe even restaurants with poor service, bad food, or unexpected high prices. It takes real patience to deal with people who have gone through any (or all) of these experiences and convince them that you have an enjoyable time waiting just for them.

Judgment: It takes sound judgment on the part of the employee to know what to do and how to deal with different tourists. The needs, wants, and desires of people are different. Some tourists want their daily itineraries planned for them. They appreciate it if you make room reservations for them, or reserve a fishing boat, or arrange a guided tour. Other tourists want to plan their own activities and may become upset if you try to help them too much.

Listen carefully to what the tourist says. How a tourist responds to being told of local attractions indicates what kind of help a tourist really wants. It takes good judgment to know how to serve people with varying wants and needs.

Adaptability: Tourism service is a team effort. A tourism employee must be able to get along and cooperate with fellow workers. It takes a team effort to provide the tourist with an enjoyable experience. The tourist is quickly aware of friction among employees. Ill feelings among co-workers cast a negative cloud on the visitors' sense of enjoyment. Tourism employees must adapt smoothly to their working environment. Personal differences must be put aside in favor of presenting the tourist with a picture of a cooperative team effort.

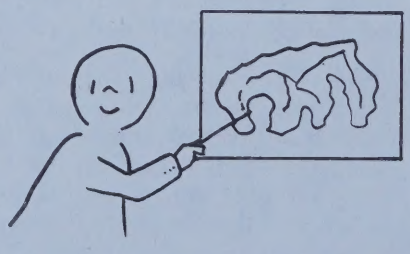
Flexibility: Tourists are noted for changing their minds. They are discovering new interests and attractions. They frequently change their minds as to what they want to do and see. The tourist industry employee must recognize this changeability and be willing to make last minute changes and fulfill unexpected requests.

Willingness to change is important.

Technical Competence

A second qualification of a good employee in a tourist-related business is technical competence. Employees should develop human relations skills and acquire the information base necessary to perform their jobs well. It takes concentrated effort to learn the technical information needed to be successful in the people business. New employees should spend a considerable amount of time learning their jobs before greeting tourists for the first time. A person would not consider working as a secretary without first learning to type. Likewise, a tourist facility employee should first have knowledge of local attractions, be able to give precise directions on how to get to the attractions, and develop good communications and salesmanship skills.

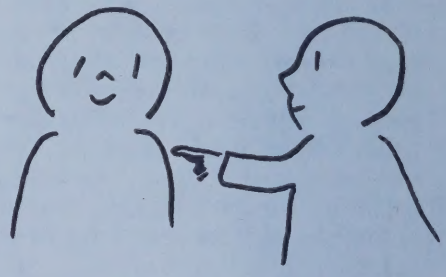
Knowledge of Attractions: Michigan has one of the largest tourist industries in the United States. It abounds in natural and man-made attractions. It is the job of the tourist business employee to first find out what are the visitors' different interests. After visitors indicate what interests them, direct them to local attractions that will appeal to them. Here the tourist guide has to do some homework. You cannot "sell" local attractions if you have never seen them. It takes first-hand experience to become really enthusiastic about an attraction and "sell" it to visitors. Be observant and note things that may interest the actual tourists. Become a tourist yourself, and see the sights in your community through a tourist's eyes.



Know your local attractions.

There are many fine brochures on local tourist attractions. Give these freely to visitors and encourage them to go, see and enjoy the attractions in the area. Know the location of churches, retail stores, gasoline stations, the Chamber of Commerce office, parks, playgrounds, and picnic areas, campgrounds, banks, eating places, motels, medical facilities, numbered county roads, etc.

Skill in Giving Directions: It is one thing to know where something is and quite another thing to direct someone there. Directions should be given very carefully and precisely.



Learn how to give directions.

Use familiar terms when giving directions. Avoid using names of people's houses or farms. The tourist does not know where "Millington's subdivision" is or where the "old Coot farm" is located.

The best directions include accurate distances and easily recognizable landmarks. Stop signs, traffic lights, churches, conspicuous stores, gasoline stations, railroad tracks, crossroads, etc. make good reference points that the tourist can understand.

Specific distances should be given. "A little piece down the road" may mean anything from one

block to thirty miles or more. If the attraction is one and seven-tenths of a mile away, tell the tourist. If the tourist employee does not know how far away it is, they should not guess at the distance. Bad information is worse than none at all. Do your homework and find out the exact distances and directions to all local attractions.

An ample supply of maps should be kept on hand. When giving directions to an attraction, draw the route on a map, pointing out landmarks along the route and indicating interesting side trips. If not enough maps are available to give to each party of tourists, plenty of paper should be available on which to draw the route to local attractions.

Most tourists have little sense of direction. They are in a new and unfamiliar place and usually have trouble telling north from south. So it is a good idea to give directions indicating turns by "left" and "right."

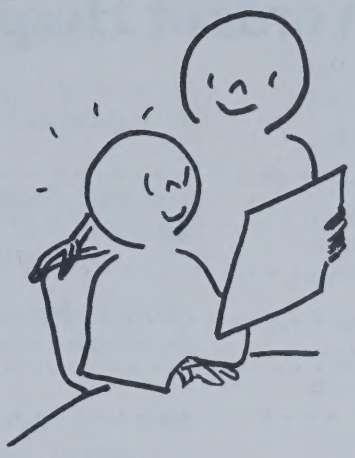
The following is a good example of how to give directions:

"I'd be happy to tell you how to get to Little Deer Lake. Turn left out of our parking lot here. Go to the third crossroad, that is two and one-tenth of a mile from here, and make a right-hand turn. This will be a well maintained gravel road. Travel down this road for seven miles until you come to a railroad track. One quarter of a mile after crossing the railroad track there will be a dirt road going to your left. This is the Little Deer Lake Road. The lake is one-half of a mile down this road."

To reinforce the above directions, draw a map.

Salesmanship: Your job as a tourist business employee is a sales job. You are selling the local area and the products of your employer. You are successful only after a visitor purchases a product and is satisfied with it. The product might be a ride on a sightseeing bus, a scenic attraction, a piece of apple pie, or a souvenir.

It is sales that bring in the money needed to keep the business going and pay salaries. Visitors alone do not bring profits—sales do.



Be enthusiastic.

Selling begins with recruiting potential customers. People must be interested in your product or service before they will buy. Before visitors can be expected to spend time and money in your community, they must first become interested in looking at the community and what it offers.

Once you know people are interested in what you are offering for sale, ask questions of them and listen intently to their answers. This will help you sense their buying motives, purchasing ability, and real interests. It would be futile to try to convince someone who is afraid of heights to climb to the top of the firetower south of town. Likewise, if people cannot afford luxury accommodations, don't suggest lodging in that price range.

When responding to objections about a product, use a soft sell approach. Stress the positive points. This will help turn objections into advantages. A salesperson should know everything possible about the product.

When it's time to close the sale, ask the visitor to purchase that ticket or see a local historic site. Help the visitor to "buy the area" as much as possible. After convincing visitors to stay in the community a little longer, make motel or dinner reservations for them, and help them plan their sightseeing itinerary.

After they have "bought," their buying decisions should be reinforced. Sharing the customer's excitement about their new purchase makes them feel that they have made a wise decision.

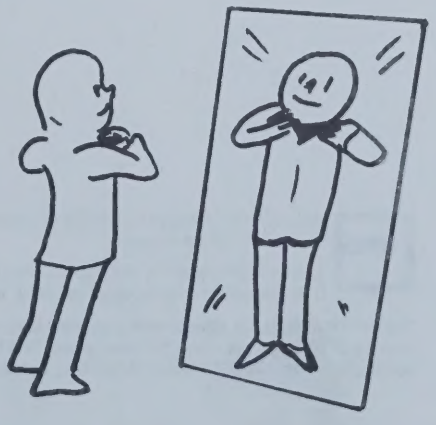
Employees in tourist related businesses should practice "missionary selling" in addition to direct selling. In missionary selling, the sales effort focuses on building good will and a positive image of the community. It involves making an extra effort to make sure visitors are satisfied, giving special attention to service, and volunteering information on the history, attractions, and activities of the community. A favorable impression brings repeat business and new business generated by word-of-mouth advertising.

Appearance

Appearance is extremely important in the tourist business. Before anything is said to or done for the tourist, the tourist judges employees on the way they look. Visitors may get their first impression of the community by the appearance of the tourist workers—the way they dress, act, and smell.

Appearance has much to do with the way visitors treat tourist employees. Tourists tend to doubt what people with messy hair and sloppy clothes have to say. Visitors have little faith in the information given to them and have a negative attitude on the whole community.

Dress neatly and simply. Wear clean, unwrinkled clothes. Keep



Appearance counts.

your hair clean and well combed. Use makeup and jewelry sparingly. Bathe regularly. Avoid smoking, chewing gum, or eating where you can be seen by visitors. Always strive to look the very best you possibly can.

Personality

A fourth important qualification of an employee is a tourist-oriented business related to the personality of the individual. A good visitor-oriented personality comes from a knowledge of human relations. A human relations personality is smiling, friendly, and pleasant; it is courteous, adaptable, and sociable; it is following the rules of simple etiquette; it is outgoing, communicative, and helpful; it is good taste and getting people to trust and feel comfortable with you.

Part of a personality is how well one understands the personalities of others and can adapt to them. You have heard the old saying that the customer is always right. The personality of the tourist-oriented employee must accept an occasional cantakerous customer and be able to turn hostility into positive good will.

With a little effort and thought, personalities can change. People can learn to be more friendly and outgoing if they really try. The key to personality development is to first find out how other people perceive *your* personality. Take an inventory of your personality traits and note personality changes you would like to make. Then work on making these changes.

Summary

Your business is pleasing people. People have an insatiable thirst to explore places not familiar to them. They travel, visit, and always want to know what is on the other side of the hill. Human beings have a basic desire to travel.

Tourism is a major factor in the economy of Michigan. The skill of the people in the industry determines its success. Attitudes, technical competence, appearance, and personalities measure the viability of the tourist industry.

Visitors must be satisfied with what they see and experience in their dealings with local people. The tourist industry is people oriented and people dependent. After all—what is a lodging facility without people?

Hospitality Checklist

	Always	*Sometimes*	*Never*
Visitors are greeted as soon as they arrive	____	____	____
I try to make guests feel welcome	____	____	____
I greet guests with a smile	____	____	____
My customers are my first concern	____	____	____
I am glad to help visitors in any way I can	____	____	____
I aim to please my customers	____	____	____
Visitors receive my undivided attention	____	____	____
I know my customer's name and use it	____	____	____
I listen carefully to what tourists say	____	____	____
I promote friendliness	____	____	____
Visitors know exactly what they want to see and do in my community	____	____	____
I volunteer help and information even though it may not be requested	____	____	____
I provide accurate information	____	____	____
I give precise and easily followed directions	____	____	____
My appearance is at its best	____	____	____
I bathe daily	____	____	____
My hair is neatly kept	____	____	____
I use a deodorant daily	____	____	____
I am honest in my dealings with tourists	____	____	____
The tourist is quickly aware of friction among employees	____	____	____
Tourism service is a team effort	____	____	____
I try to "sell" my local community	____	____	____
I tell visitors what there is to do here during the off-season	____	____	____
I invite guests back to the area	____	____	____
I enjoy my work	____	____	____

Test Your Hospitality I.Q.

Each question has one or more correct answers:

1. All tourists should be greeted by:)a a warm friendly smile, b) a high pressure sales pitch, c) an indifferent attitude.
2. A tourist is: a) valued only for his/her money, b) a uniquely different type of person, c) a welcome guest visiting your community.
3. Promotional literature is: a) costly and should be kept where tourists can't get to it, b) a useful selling aid, c) dull and boring.
4. The best directions are given by indicating: a) turns using points on the compass (north, south, east, west), b) exact distances, c) locally known landmarks such as the "old Johnson place."
5. Most tourists appreciate it if you: a) volunteer information even though it may not be requested, b) ignore them unless they ask for your help, c) tell them all your personal problems.
6. The money that tourists spend in your community: a) creates local jobs, b) adds to the tax base, c) provides local services that otherwise would not be possible.
7. The name of the tourist game is: a) money, b) endurance, c) human relations.
8. Your attitude toward tourists: a) is not important to your community, b) is a signal of how enjoyable their visit is going to be, c) can easily be hidden from them, d) speaks louder than your words.
9. The way to deal with a demanding tourist is to: a) treat them the same way they treat you, b) yell at them if they are behaving rudely, c) smile and be patient with them.
10. The greatest competition for the tourist dollar comes from: a) other states and foreign countries, b) nearby communities, c) competition within your own country.
11. Your appearance: a) has very little to do with how visitors treat you, b) is a reflection upon your entire community, c) is nobody's business but your own.
12. Tourist employees and businesses must: a) cooperate and work together for the benefit of all, b) do their own thing and ignore everyone else, c) make negative comments to tourists about other tourist businesses.

Scoring: Give yourself 2 points for each correct answer. The highest possible score is 30 points. Question number 6 is worth a maximum of 6 points or 2 points for each correct letter. Question 8 is worth a total of 4 points, 2 for each correct letter. All other questions are worth 2 points each.

28 - 30 points	Excellent hospitality I.Q.
24 - 26 points	Very good hospitality I.Q.
20 - 22 points	Some improvement needed.
0 - 18 points	What business did you say you were in?

Answers: 1-a; 2-c; 3-b; 4-b; 5-a; 6-a,b, and c; 7-c; 8-b and d; 9-c; 10-a; 11-b; 12-a.

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The Words of Hospitality

Courteous Words	instead of sharp replies
Smiles	instead of bored looks
Enthusiasm	instead of dullness
Response	instead of indifference
Warmth	instead of coldness
Understanding	instead of a closed mind
Attention	instead of neglect
Patience	instead of irritation
Sincerity	instead of being mechanical
Consideration	instead of annoyance
Remembering Details	instead of forgetting them
Facts	instead of arguments
Creative Ideas	instead of humdrum
Giving	instead of getting
Action	instead of delay
Appreciation	instead of apathy

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